

From: NDDoH Communications
Date: April 23, 2021
Title: Q&A regarding the end of the COVID-19 emergency declaration
Audience: Internal DoH sections, Education Partners

Q: What changes with the end of the COVID-19 emergency declaration?

A: The NDDoH will continue to coordinate COVID-19 response operations. This includes oversight of the logistics, planning, and communication efforts built during the activation period. With the end of the emergency declaration, the unified command structure, which included the Department of Emergency Services, Office of the Governor, and the NDDoH, will dissolve. The NDDoH will coordinate and lead operations.

Usually, when an emergency declaration ends, the involvement of emergency services and the National Guard also ends. However, the National Guard is a critical component of COVID-19 testing and vaccination efforts, and they will continue to serve as requested by Governor Burgum in his [announcement](#) on 4/21/2021.

- The [ND Smart Restart](#) plan and color levels will be discontinued on 4/30/2021. The NDDoH will continue to provide information online at [Coronavirus | Department of Health \(nd.gov\)](#).
- Executive orders issued during the emergency period will expire on 4/30/2021.
- The state-wide State Health Officer order regarding isolation requirements will also expire on 4/30/2021.
- The State Health Officer and Local Health Officers retain authority to issue isolation orders on a case-by-case basis for communicable diseases, as warranted see [North Dakota Century Code Chapter 23-07.6](#).

Q: What doesn't change with the end of the COVID-19 emergency declaration?

A: The COVID-19 virus is still present in our communities. The ending of the emergency declaration period does not represent an end to the threat the COVID-19 virus poses.

- The State Health Officer and Local Health Officers retain authority to issue isolation orders on a case-by-case basis for communicable diseases, as warranted (see [North Dakota Century Code Chapter 23-07.6](#)).
- Schools are strongly encouraged to follow [exclusion policies](#) already in place for contagious illness (i.e., chickenpox, measles, etc.) as appropriate guidelines for those who test positive for COVID-19. A COVID-19 [decision tree for schools](#) and a [decision tree for parents](#) are available online. Allowing individuals who are COVID-19 positive or non-masked close contacts to attend school in-person poses a risk to other students, faculty, and staff. View additional resources online: [Schools | Child Care | Universities | Department of Health \(nd.gov\)](#)
- [Testing](#) will continue and is encouraged.
- [Vaccines](#) for those who are eligible are encouraged and are an important tool in the fight against COVID-19.

Q: What do schools need to do?

A: For the safety of students, staff, and faculty, the NDDoH **strongly recommends** schools continue to use and layer [prevention strategies](#) as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

- Five key prevention strategies are essential to ensure the safe delivery of in-person instruction and help to prevent COVID-19 transmission in schools:
 - Universal and correct use of [masks](#)
 - [Physical distancing](#)
 - [Handwashing and respiratory etiquette](#)
 - [Cleaning](#) and maintaining healthy facilities
 - [Contact tracing](#) in combination with isolation and quarantine

- The NDDoH recommends schools providing in-person instruction **prioritize** three prevention strategies:
 - Universal and correct use of masks will reduce the number of those who need to quarantine if exposed.
 - Physical distancing is maximized to the greatest extent possible.
 - Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine.
- All prevention strategies provide some level of protection; layered strategies implemented at the same time provide the greatest level of protection.
- Schools should adopt prevention strategies to the largest extent practical—a layered approach is essential.
- Schools are strongly encouraged to follow [exclusion policies](#) already in place for contagious illness (i.e., chickenpox, measles, etc.) as appropriate guidelines for those who test positive for COVID-19. A COVID-19 [decision tree for schools](#) and a [decision tree for parents](#) are available online. Allowing individuals who are COVID-19 positive or non-masked close contacts to attend school in-person poses a risk to other students, faculty, and staff. View additional resources online: [Schools | Child Care | Universities | Department of Health \(nd.gov\)](#)

Q: Will COVID-19 isolation orders continue to be in place after April 30, 2021?

A: No, the state-wide State Health Officer order regarding isolation requirements will expire on 4/30/2021.

- The State Health Officer and Local Health Officers retain authority to issue isolation orders on a case-by-case basis for communicable diseases, as warranted (see [North Dakota Century Code Chapter 23-07.6](#)).
- The NDDoH strongly recommends individuals who test positive for COVID-19 isolate for a minimum of 10 days as outlined in [COVID-19 isolation guidance](#).
- Close-contacts who were not wearing a mask or are not fully vaccinated should quarantine as outlined in the quarantine guidance as outlined in [What To Do If You Are A Close Contact | Department of Health \(nd.gov\)](#)

- Schools are strongly encouraged to follow [exclusion policies](#) already in place for contagious illness (i.e., chickenpox, measles, etc.) as appropriate guidelines for those who test positive for COVID-19.
- Allowing individuals who are COVID-19 positive or non-masked close contacts to attend school in-person poses a risk to other students, faculty, and staff.
- View additional resources online [Schools | Child Care | Universities | Department of Health \(nd.gov\)](#).